

Pam-India

Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund.

No. 477.

Jubbulpore, 6th Sept., 1897.

THE REV. DR. T. S. JOHNSON.

DDAR SIR,—I am desired by our Committee to convey to you, and through you, to the American people our sincere thanks for the large consignment of American corn,—maize, rye, and beans—they have sent for the famine-stricken in these parts. This arrived most opportunely to serve as food-grain, and help maintain the poor for the next two months, until our present crops become available. The distress has been most acute as you are aware, and but for the liberality of Europe and America the lives of thousands must have been lost. The relief we have been able to give from the funds so bountifully contributed has been gratefully appreciated, and on behalf of these poor we tender America our best thanks.

I am Dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

P. CULLEN, M.D.,

Hony. Secy. I. F. C. R. Fund,

Jubbulpore District.

DEAR DR. JOHNSON,—Please find a short memo enclosed written by me for Mr. James on the distribution of the American grain.

Sincerely yours,

Jubbulpore,) B. ROBERTSON,
28-10-97.) Deputy Commissioner.

Copy of a demi-official note dated 25th October, 1897, from the Deputy Commissioner Jubbulpore to the Vice-Chairman Central Executive Committee, Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund, Calcutta.

When it was known that grain was expected from America for distribution in famine districts, the Reverend Dr. Johnson of Jubbulpore was kind enough to say that he would use his endeavours to procure a supply for this district. He asked me to let him know the railway stations to which it should be sent. I accordingly instructed him that grain might be sent in certain stated proportions to Kutni, Sleemnabad Road, Sehora Road, and Jubbulpore Stations on the East Indian Railway.

About the middle of August I was informed that a large consignment was being despatched as arranged. The first to arrive was the consignment for Kutni, which came about August 20th. Information of its arrival was at once wired to me, and I went to Kutni to arrange for its distribution.

By this time the Famine in the adjoining district of Mandla had developed in a serious manner, and the Commissioner of the Jubbulpore Division pressed me to spare some of the grain intended for my district, so that it might be available for Mandla. I therefore arranged to send one truck of the Kutni grain direct to Jubbulpore, so that the Mandla district might receive this as an advance consignment. A further supply would be sent

to Mandla from the Jubbulpore consignment.

* * * *

Two trucks were sent to Rupond station on the Bengal-Nagpore Railway to be distributed by the Circle Relief Officer of Barwara. One truck was made over to the Church Missionary Society at Kutni for distribution amongst the poor of the town. The remainder was given out in doles among the poorer classes of cultivators, particularly aborigines and low castes. We had already lists of these poor cultivators prepared for the purposes of the Mansion House Fund. The amount of the latter was not sufficient to adequately supply the cultivators with food grain during the rains, when they were ploughing their fields and tending their crops, and the distribution of the American grain therefore served a most useful object in to some extent supplying this want.

The distribution was effected in every case under the control of a Famine Relief Officer, and I can testify to the work having been well carried out. The general plan adopted was first, to choose a village where the inhabitants were aborigines or were known to be specially poor. The Mansion-House relief list of the village was scrutinised, and the poorer tenants selected. A signed ticket was then given to the tenant for 20 or 30 seers, or as the case might be, and he was told to go to the Central Store where the grain was kept, present his ticket and receive his dole. Tickets of different colours were issued for different quantities of grain, so that, the illiterate people might know the value of their tickets and get supplied with the right amount.

This was the usual procedure, though local officers occasionally departed from it according to local circumstances. I may add that the plan enabled distribution to be done at very little cost. The cultivators were ready to walk long distances to the Central Store to get their supply, and as in the Rains almost the only means of transport in this district is by coolies, the cultivators did the carrying themselves, and there was thus no extra cost

The consignments for Sleemanabad, Sehora and Jubbulpore all arrived before the end of August and distribution was taken in hand at once. Of the Jubbulpore consignment $\frac{5}{1768}$ Mds. trucks were given to the Mandla District, and the American Mission kept $\frac{3\frac{1}{2}}{1036}$ Mds. making over $\frac{6\frac{1}{2}}{2091}$ Mds. trucks to me for distribution in the villages in the South of the District.

* * * *

In closing this note, I would finally say that the grain was thankfully received by the cultivators. They were not quite sure what to do with the beans, but I believe the general impression was that they

should be ground and used as "dál" (pulse-meal) which is eaten mixed with rice). A desire was prevalent in some places to keep back a little of the rye, which was considered a new kind of wheat, and sow it. From this I dissuaded the cultivators, as it would not grow properly here. Mr. Marriott, one of the most experienced of my Relief Officers, has told me that the people were keener about the distribution of the grain than about any other kind of relief. It was the form of charity which appealed to them most, and I can testify from my own experience to the gratitude with which it was received.

31-10-97.

DEAR DR. JOHNSON,—You will I am sure be glad to see the enclosed Extract from the diary of Mr. Sharp's—Famine Relief Officer Mandla.

Yours Sincerely,

J. B. FULLER,

Commissioner,

Jubbulpore Division.

Extract from the diary of Mr. Sharp, Famine Relief Officer, Ramnagar and Bichhia Circles in the Mandla district, for fortnight ending 16th October, 1897.

AMERICAN GRAIN.—Owing to mismanagement on the part of the Postal Department, orders on this subject reached me late. But, when once I got the arrangement started, the distribution proceeded with great rapidity. I have provided Revenue Inspectors with Cheque books, and have myself, in the last fortnight, written Cheques for nearly 400 maunds. When I left Mandla, the grain was going off fast at that centre; at Ramnagar the stock was soon exhausted, and bearers of Cheques had to wait till fresh boat loads came up the Nerbudda; at Bichhia I disposed of almost the whole stock in two days, and have sent for more. The people hail the grain with delight, and are astounded at the sizes of the maize and beans. The poorer sort of cultivators, to whom it has been given, are determined to reserve a little for sowing, as they wish to see if such fine grain can be produced here. Nor was the grain circulated merely among villages near the centres. I have sent hack tenants laden with it to Cholu Aturia Ranjhipuri, the very limits of the Circle, and it is a common sight, even in remote jungle, to see by the pathway a large Californian bean, or a grain of maize, which has fallen from the basket of some happy and homeward returning cultivator.

* Of these 1 truck was given to the C. M. S. Mission Jubbulpore and 1 to the Wesleyan Mission, and 6 cart loads to the Scotch Mission at Seoni (T. S. J.).

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